

This Old House

64
MAGIC
NUMBERS

that'll change
your home
life

TURN ON THE *charm* INDOORS AND OUT

LED
BULBS:
WHAT
TO USE
WHERE

- > Easy DIY upgrades
- > Cottage-garden secrets
- > Splashy paint and paper looks

Grow
your best
hydrangeas
ever!
p. 80

GET A BETTER
BACKYARD!

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a great lawn

Foolproof veggie beds

Genius garden gear

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Contents

THIS OLD HOUSE: APRIL 2014

Turn on the charm

Idea file

- 22 **before + after: kitchen:** *before* of a small kitchen with a cluttered island and a small island in the way. *after* is a bright, open space.
- 31 **before + after: bedroom:** *before* of a cluttered bedroom with a small bed and a small island. *after* is a bright, open space.
- 43 **demystifying LEDs:** *before* of a room with a small bed and a small island. *after* is a bright, open space.
- 60 **recreating a 1915 Craftsman:** *before* of a room with a small bed and a small island. *after* is a bright, open space.
- 68 **troubleshooting your vegetable garden:** *before* of a room with a small bed and a small island. *after* is a bright, open space.
- 74 **64 important numbers every homeowner should know:** *before* of a room with a small bed and a small island. *after* is a bright, open space.



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Cover Photography by SAUL LOEB



22
BEFORE + AFTER
KITCHEN



80
ALL ABOUT
HYDRANGEAS



15
HOME
SOLUTIONS

APRIL 2014 [THISOLDHOUSE.COM](http://thisoldhouse.com) 3



Watch videos and see more photos! How on the iPad, the Roku, and other select tablets. Available at thisoldhouse.com/ tablets and iTunes.



home solutions

- 17 Turn 50 years of your favorite campfire dinner into a permanent dinner. How to put a cast-iron skillet hanging over a fire, and a cast-iron skillet hanging over a fire, and a cast-iron skillet hanging over a fire.

upgrades

- 35 shopping How to get a kitchen island for less.
42 get this look for less Traditional rustic modern farmhouse.
52 build it or buy it? How to choose a kitchen island.
60 all about the kitchen island.

how-to projects

- 49 landscaping How to create a garden that is both beautiful and functional. How to create a garden that is both beautiful and functional.
55 weekend remodel How to create a garden that is both beautiful and functional. How to create a garden that is both beautiful and functional.

ask this old house

- 86 Q+A The old house of the future. How to create a garden that is both beautiful and functional. How to create a garden that is both beautiful and functional.
90 step-by-step How to create a garden that is both beautiful and functional. How to create a garden that is both beautiful and functional.
94 Norm's tricks of the trade How to create a garden that is both beautiful and functional. How to create a garden that is both beautiful and functional.

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 7 Interview This Old House
8 reader mail
10 digital highlights
12 checklist
16 directory
104 save the old house

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Reader mail



WHETHER DREAMING UP the perfect kitchen or gluing up a tabletop, *TOH* readers from as far away as South Africa recently shared inspiration, tips, and thanks, as well as an ideal spring reader project.

More prep space

Loved the kitchen on the cover of January/February 2014 (*Just Before + After: Kitchen*). We are planning to redo our cottage kitchen. I love, and want, those extra-deep counters.

—GEORGIA GARY NIMS, MORRISVILLE, NC

Global appeal

Despite living on the most southern tip of Africa, I love your magazine. We have an old house of stone & timber over here, but there is nothing wrong with dreaming about one and incorporating elements into my home. Keep up your great magazine!

—ADRIENNE J. JOHANNESBURG

Tips for edge-gluing

In addition to Norm's methods for gluing up several boards to keep them from cupping [Norm's Tricks of the Trade,

January/February 2014], I acknowledge the direction of the nail goes from joint to joint. Also, I place wax paper on the seams where the clamps are placed to simplify glue cleanup.

—DICKIEEY VERNIA MAZ

Getting the most from TOH

TOH has become one of my favorite magazines in the past few years and the only magazine I read cover to cover. I also signed up at the website for one of your free e-newsletters that send special tips on a regular basis. Thank you for all the helpful suggestions!

—JIMMYEY COULINA MD

HOW TO REACH US

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Please include your full name, address, and phone number. Published letters are edited for clarity and length.



Privacy planter

JERRY HARRIS, NORTH CANTON, OHIO

A white back, you provided me with the plans to make a privacy planter as a gift for my wife [below right]. She is already asking for another one. I wish I was the woodworker that you said was the best! But I have very bad eyes and I can't do it. I will post photos of the planter when I find the time to do it for the planter at thefirsthouse.com/402546/.



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TABLET

Bonus features

Discover extra content in our digital edition, including more photos from the retro kitchen remodel and the Craftsman house renovation, a video showing how to build a rain barrel, and seasonal questions in Ask This Old House. Download your copy at thisoldhouse.com/tablet.



MOST POPULAR VIDEO

**How to refinish
hardwood floors**

In our most watched how-to, This Old House general contractor Tom Silva goes over the steps for applying a new finish to old wood. See how he does it at thisoldhouse.com/apr2014.



THE COZIEST PLACES DON'T ALWAYS
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Checklist

APRIL 2014

Easy ways to
improve your home
right now

6 FAST FIXES

Check weather hoses:

To avoid costly flooding, look for cracks and bulges in weather hoses and replace if there's any sign of wear.

Reseed bare patches:

Fill bare spots by raking and topdressing with garden soil and grass seed. Water regularly to keep seeds moist.



Fix driveway cracks: Winter ice can cause or deepen cracks in concrete driveways. For narrow gaps, apply a restoring patch filler. In wider ones, use patching mortar.

Clean and seal your fireplace:

Keep chimneys from backing up your chimney by sweeping your firebricks. Then schedule a cleaning and inspection—you can often get lower rates in the off season.

Replace your AC filter:

Be sure running on your AC this spring starts in the filter so that it runs with maximum efficiency.

Clean your doormat:

Dirty mats are less effective at trapping dirt and debris. Use a vacuum to clean out caked-in dirt so mats are ready for muddy spring shoes.

Prime garden beds:

Help set yourself up for a successful planting season by getting garden beds squared away before you dig in. Clear away any debris left over from the winter, as well as any weeds, before spreading 1 to 2 inches of compost over the soil to boost nutrient value. Use a cultivator or garden fork to mix this into the top 3 to 4 inches of soil, then rake the bed smooth before you sow seeds or put in plants.



Prep your pressure washer:

Before dusting off for another round of outdoor spring cleaning, make sure it's up to snuff with these steps: 1. Replace the air filter to keep dirt and debris from getting into the engine. 2. Change the oil so that it's fresh for the season. 3. Clean the water inlet screen with dish soap and a small brush to make sure it's not clogged.



Inspect your nest:

April is National Home Inspection month—and just because you already own your home, don't think you're off the hook. If you've lived in your home five years or more, call in a pro to make the rounds. Of particular interest: electrical systems, which might be out of date, and unfinished basements and crawl spaces, which can succumb to moisture or pests.



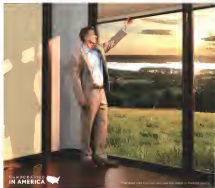
Recycle better:

Celebrate Earth Day on April 22 by revving up your family's recycling practices. Make sure to wash plastic or glass containers before adding them to the bin, and pay attention to product's recycling numbers and colors. Regulations vary by area, so to learn what makes the cut in your city visit earth911.com.

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home solutions

Editorial: Rust-Oleum® for Business

10 USES COOL TOOLS SPRING UPKEEP NIFTY IDEA MORE

A dresser that stacks up

Even when it looks like you're out of space, there's always a way to make the most of it. In this case, the solution is a dresser that stacks up. The Rust-Oleum® Restore 10X is a revolutionary, easy-to-apply repair coating that's 10 times thicker than paint. And it's guaranteed for life. Even in places like Fernandina Beach, Florida, where their boardwalks are subjected to extreme weather and tons of punishing traffic. So if it works there, just imagine what it can do for your deck at home. Don't rebuild. Apply the coating that repairs AND repairs. Rust-Oleum Restore 10X.



10 IDEAS Paint cans

Check ideas for these metal punks, whether you've got an emptied leftover* or a pristine home-center buy.

1. **Make containers for small jobs.** The handle makes it easy to pick when painting small jobs.

2. **Shade a lamp.** Snap off the handle of a large can with wire cutters, remove the bottom with a can opener. Drill small holes in the metal sides following any design you like, then paint. Cut a disk out of hardware cloth to fit snugly inside the can, cut a smaller circle, large enough to fit a lamp socket without a lamp, out of the disk in the center. Fit the disk inside the can. Paint the shade on the socket.

3. **Store pencils or brushes.** Place adhesive-backed



inseparators on the bottom of small paint cans (use a hot glue gun for extra hold). Attach to an inexpensive mayrized knobstick in the wall.

4. **Make a bag dispenser.** Cut a circular hole in the lid of a large paint can and file any sharp edges. Slash a roll of garbage bags in the can, pulling the free end through the hole.

5. **Build a wire rack.** Remove the tape and bottom of quart-size paint cans with a can opener.

Connect several cans laid side by side using heavy-duty glue or epoxy adhesive. Stack more cans on top of them in an aerial way and glue in place. Use dishcloths or binder clips to secure them until the glue dries.

6. **Assemble a bird feeder.** Remove the lid and the sturdy handle around the middle of the can to form sideways. Glue a 4-inch section of 1/4-inch wood dowel to the bottom lip of the can to form perch. Add birdseed and hang.



7. **Stabilize a rick bench.** Fill a large paint can with sand or gravel and stick a garden bench in the middle.

8. **Organize owner's mementos.** Lay a row of large paint cans side by side on a shelf in the garage to store brooms.

9. **Light up a path.** To make decorative luminaries, drill holes in paint-can cans, making a pattern. Place an incandescent candle in each can.

10. **Fashion a hanging planter.** Cut three 2x4 rose holes in the bottom of a large can (handle removed) and three in the sides near the top (3 lined with cash or straw). Add potting soil, then plant perennials or other similar trailing plants.

—KATIE AGNEW

MORE TO USE: Find more smart uses for leftovers by clicking this page or going to houzz.com/100204

A stylish laundry room for \$87

White cabinets, pale aqua walls, and horizontal batten detailing give a cave-like space a bright new look



BEFORE The cramped closet was space well overpowered by dingy-pink cabinets. **AFTER** White undercabinet lighting lets light give the space its shining glow. A DIY holder (shown below) keeps the ironing board off the floor but still within reach.



TRANSFORMING LAUNDRY ROOMS often get the short end of the stick-style work. That was the case at Jennifer and Michael Mead's house in Kirkland, Washington, where the tiny utility space felt dim and claustrophobic. To lighten it up, Jennifer first removed the room's swinging door to open it up, then removed the middle door to the bank of cabinets above the machines. Next, she created wainscoting by tacking 3/4-inch-wide medium-density fiberboard (MDF) strips to the bottom portions of the wall, creating a horizontally

the painted the boards the lower wall, and the cabinets in creating walls. Dressing the cabinet details and edges with sandpaper and darkening the exposed wood with an ink pad gave them an aged patina. Above the wainscoting, the walls and ceiling got a coat of soft blue-green. A DIY rack shares the ironing board in a convenient, out-of-the-way spot, and the rods gives everyone more breathing room. It all makes the space feel so much larger," Jennifer says. "Now it actually feels good to be doing laundry." —MICHAEL BAKER

THE PROJECT TALLY

Removed a cabinet door for screen open look \$0
 Covered wainscoting using 3/4-inch-wide MDF strips, nailed up horizontally \$30
 Painted the cabinets and bottom portions of the walls with off-white white paint \$33
 Gessoed the cabinets using sandpaper and stopcoating with the hardware to create a distressed effect \$0
 Added a peg of color on the upper walls and ceiling with blue-green paint \$33
 Made a holder using a wood board and hooks to share the family's ironing board \$12
 Hung a sign above the cabinet's made with wood and sticks, underlaid \$20

TOTAL **\$87**

THRIFTY TIP
 Look for your materials in our America's Best Deal, and covered for a photo with our photos. Buy this page or go to houzz.com/100204

Retro redo

A vintage stove and sink help a couple create a kitchen that's in sync with their 1930s house BY JENNIFER BIRD PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK LUDMAN

MANY AN OLDER home loses its charm once you set foot in the kitchen. Details lost in an effort to modernize turn into holy grails for owners down the line. For Sharon Losey and Jeff Prosser, turning back the clock in the cook space of their 1930s house, in San Luis Obispo, California, started with a couple of lucky shopping finds.

The existing 1980s kitchen had an awkward breakfast nook and bland white cabinets with ceramic tile counters. In search of a more authentic look, the couple took a trip to a salvage yard that yielded the perfect apron sink. At a nearby antique store they unearthed a vintage stove. Starting with what Jeff calls "these two big anchors," and a neatly square open floor space, he worked out a layout to blend traditional style with modern necessities, tacking dishwasher drawers and a stainless-steel refrigerator into simple, Shaker-style cabinets. The resulting space has earned the couple the best compliment of all: "Some visitors don't even know the kitchen was remodelled," says Jeff. "They think it's the same vintage in the house."



BEFORE A colorful but cluttered Eastern-style kitchen drove away from dish table cabinets and counters.

AFTER The redesign revolved around two vintage pieces: a farm sink purchased in 1983 and a 1950s-era Dacor electric burner range. Open shelving from nearby display shelves added a final display.



BEFORE

• before + after:
kitchen

A custom cabinet, with rounded corners to match the apron sink, holds two dishwasher drawers installed at either end. Dishwasher drawers: Fisher & Paykel

In place of a cramped breakfast nook are two shelves and a rolling stool—perfect for perusing recipe books or chatting with the cook.



before

The poorly planned space featured a half-wild enclosure around the breakfast nook.



after

The new pedicel, almost square footprint, with a 6-foot table in the center, feels much more spacious.



1) Set the stage between ample countertop space where the cook-took food begins.

2) Installed a bank of tall cabinets with rollout shelves, tucking in the counter depth as a prep area for a fully look.

3) Most open shelves to with the stage to display dishes.

4) Centered the sink below attention and adding dishwasher drawers to either side.

5) Created a cozy sitting area with a nook and low backshelves.

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- before + after:
kitchen

An outward corner next to the sink gets put to good use with a small cabinet with slots for trays and cutting boards. *Claremont/Kennedy Film & Color*



Pantry-cabinets flirts wall by the 20-inch counter-daybridge. Most are filled with pulled-shelf 30-inch-revolving items. Refrigerator, L-shaped.



Slippery countries with broadboard ends flank the ramp, below the burner height. The cabinetmaker built a head to conceal the vent liner and ductwork. *Photo: Benjamin Brown, a Pleasant Green cabinetmaker*

Two of the priority countries are filled with electrical outlets, allowing small appliances to be used where they are needed.



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- **ELIQUIS can cause bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death.**
- **You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding,** such as aspirin, NSAIDs, warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, or other blood thinners. Tell your doctor about all medicines, vitamins and supplements you take. While taking ELIQUIS, you may bruise more easily and it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop.
- **Get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding:**

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant or breastfeed.

- **Do not take ELQUIS if you currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding or have had a serious allergic reaction to ELQUIS.** A reaction to ELQUIS can cause hives, rash, itching, and possibly trouble breathing. Get medical help right away if you have sudden chest pain or chest tightness, have sudden swelling of your face or tongue, have trouble breathing, wheezing, or feeling dizzy or faint.

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ELIQUIS can cause bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death. This is because ELIQUIS is a blood thinner medicine that reduces blood clotting.

You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs), or if you take aspirin, clopidogrel (PLAVIX®), or other medicines to help prevent or treat blood clots.

Tell your doctor if you take any of these medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is on this list above while taking ELIQUIS.

- you may bruise more easily
- it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop

Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding when taking ELIQUIS:

- unexpected bleeding, in bleeding that lasts a long time, such as:
 - unusual bleeding from the gums
 - nosebleeds that happen often
 - menstrual bleeding or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- bleeding that is serious or you cannot control
- red, pink, or brown urine
- red or black stools (like tar)
- cough up blood or blood clots

- vomit blood or your vomit looks like coffee grounds
 - unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain
 - headaches, feeling dizzy or weak
- ELIQUIS (apixaban) is not for patients with artificial heart valves.

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ELIQUIS is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation.

It is not known if ELIQUIS is safe and effective in children.

Who should not take ELIQUIS?

Do not take ELIQUIS if you:

- currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding
 - have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS
- Ask your doctor if you are not sure.

What should I tell my doctor before taking ELIQUIS?

Before you take ELIQUIS, tell your doctor if you:

- have kidney or liver problems
- have any other medical condition
- have ever had bleeding problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if ELIQUIS will harm your unborn baby
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if ELIQUIS passes into your breast milk. You and your doctor will decide if you will take ELIQUIS or breastfeed. You should not do both.

Tell all your doctors and dentists that you are taking ELIQUIS. They should talk to the doctor who prescribed ELIQUIS for you before you have any surgery, medical or dental procedure.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some of your other medicines may affect the way ELIQUIS works. Certain medicines may increase your risk of bleeding or stroke when taken with ELIQUIS.

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(apixaban) tablets | 15, 25, 50 mg

How should I take ELIQUIS (apixaban)?

Take ELIQUIS exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Take ELIQUIS twice every day with or without food, and do not change your dose or stop taking it unless your doctor tells you to. If you miss a dose of ELIQUIS, take it as soon as you remember, and do not take more than one dose at the same time. Do not run out of ELIQUIS. Refill your prescription before you run out. Stopping ELIQUIS may increase your risk of having a stroke.

What are the possible side effects of ELIQUIS?

- See "What is the most important information I should know about ELIQUIS?"
- ELIQUIS can cause a skin rash or severe allergic reaction. Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following symptoms:
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 - swelling of your face or tongue
 - trouble breathing or wheezing
 - feeling dizzy or faint

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away. These are not all of the possible side effects of ELIQUIS. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

This is a brief summary of the most important information about ELIQUIS. For more information, talk with your doctor or pharmacist, call 1-855-ELIQUIS (1-855-354-7547), or go to www.Eliquis.com.

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PATIENT ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

This information is not a prescription and is provided only as a guide to help you understand more about your condition. It is not intended to replace the advice of your doctor. For more information, call 1-855-ELIQUIS (1-855-354-7547) or visit www.Eliquis.com.

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From cold to comfy

Wainscoting, moldings, and a soothing color scheme add character to a bland bedroom. BY TELL CONOVERS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY LISA REMBERTIN



BEFORE

BEFORE The 2000s bedroom was a plain box with old carpeting, a dingy fireplace surround, and a popcorn ceiling. AFTER Millwork details, wood floors, and a diagonal arch give the room architectural interest. Oak floor—Mulliken

CALL IT A CASE of the "builder's special blues." When Larry Byrne and his wife bought their 1980s condo, in Southern California, the bedroom was a bare box with a popcorn ceiling, the original wall-to-wall carpeting, and a nondescript fireplace. So they called an interior designer Beth Byrnes to give it makeovers. The 14-by-24-foot space also had a "howling silly" footprint, says Byrne, which was interrupted only by an oddly angled corner with two large windows and a ceiling that suddenly rose several feet, just beyond the fireplace.

Out went the carpeting, replaced by white oak flooring, white wainscoting and crown molding went in to wrap the room. Where plain-Jane rules once reined a tacky-laminate fireplace surround, Byrne used oversize floor-to-ceiling porcelain tile, extending it all the way to the ceiling. She filled the awkward window nook with a built-in bench seat and devised a square arch to conceal where the ceiling height bumps up. "Now there's delineation between the sleeping and sitting areas," says the designer, who furnished the space with shades of cream, beige, and soft blue-gray. "It is much more architecturally pleasing and comfortable now," says Larry. One [new] touch: That white popcorn ceiling is neatly hidden under a fresh layer of drywall.

• before + after:
bedroom

Ceiling: High-lit analysis doors let the design fireplace more presence
A large-scale pendant
new light the sitting area
Pendant: Shades of Light

Drawers built into the base of the window seat are particularly useful in master suite where the only closet is incorporated in the bath. Custom cabinet: Southwest Contemporary Full Pottery Barn



before

The room's long, narrow footprint had a few odd angles



after

A clever built-in and other design solutions disguise the space's awkward features

1 Made the fireplace more of a focal point by adding stone and creating a box to nestle fireplace surround

2 Preserved a comfortable flow in the space by positioning the bed and other furniture along the long wall away from the doors



3 Added a built-in sofa and a built-in storage cabinet to the fireplace

4 Added a built-in desk and a built-in storage cabinet to the fireplace

5 Used a generously sized bed and bedside tables to balance the long, low bed and provide needed storage



pro advice

BETHUN DESIGNER
COUNCIL, CALIF.

"Laying a wood floor with the planks running on diagonal creates the illusion of more space by visually widening the room. It's also a nice casual touch."



The designer came up with a diagonal wood plank to conceal a change in wall height and to expand the ceiling and sleeping area

The room's pale blue-green walls, chunky white pendant, neutral furnishings, and natural wood floor add up to a soothing beach-inspired color palette



Enter your remodel story to win America's Best Remodel Contest. The contest is only open to those who share their story on the Remodelista website.

The curved wall frame and baseboards in the recessed fireplace soften the rectangular space. Chunky white furniture pieces sat against a blend of rather than bland out. Lamp: HomeGoods



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shopping

Animal-print wallpaper

No, we're not talking leopard spots. Here, 12 cheeky ways to take a walk on the wild side BY HEGAN BAKER • PHOTOGRAPH BY TUSHNETIM

WE KNOW IT'S a jungle out there, but in the comfort of your own home, life doesn't always need to be so serious. Wild coverings featuring creatures of land, sea, and sky tap into both your sense of style and your sense of fun. Pick some polka-dot poaches to liven up the powder room, or transform a white-box bedroom with a little help from T rex and *Howeendow*. Create a focal wall in the study with a sophisticated tarantula report, or let the walls of a walk-in closet whisper lovebirds. Why not engage some unexpected memory? We've got a dozen playful options here to put you on the right track.



1 > wild kingdom

EMERY
Made of Smart vinyl.
Highlights: Stars of the savanna stand out on sunny orange-\$48 for a 36-in. x 12-ft. roll (available online only).
Join the club.

2 > flying fish

EMERY
Made of Unstained paper.
Highlights: Bold, colorful fish swim in blue water-\$13 per sq. ft., also available online only.
Join the club.

**3- shell game**

THE ART
Made of Gilded paper
Highlights: Whimsical
like turtles offer a subtle
take on the animal world
\$52 for a 30-sq.-ft. roll
theluxdesign.com
for details

5- for the birds

AMERICAN
Made of Gilded paper
Highlights: Pretty lines
and a subtle pattern
by hand, across ink and
folds are all recycled
\$160 for a 30-sq.-ft. roll
americanwall.com

4- cut tubes

SANDERS & SONS
Made of Uncoated paper
Highlights: These
black cats are adapted
from a 1930s textile
design. About \$60
for a 30-sq.-ft. roll
sandersandsons.com

6- prehistoric

EMERSON
Made of Shiny vinyl
Highlights: This deep
brown design suits an
office or a kid's room.
\$68 for a 30-sq.-ft. roll
emersonwall.com
for details

7- soaring style

BYDGE & WEST
Made of Uncoated paper
Highlights: This
abstract design is a
modern take on a
classic. About \$60
for a 30-sq.-ft. roll
bydgenwest.com

Spots are great,
just not on your faucet.

Spot-Resist finish only from Moen®.
Because you have better things to
do than clean your faucet.
moen.com

MOEN
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8

9

10

11

12

8- menagerie
TRUST
 Made of Coated paper
 Highlights: Silhouetted animals echo the style of Mexican Oaxacan folk art
 \$19 for a 30 sq. ft. roll
 @houseofdesign.com
 for dealers

11- sea life
TRUST
 Made of Coated paper
 Highlights: Stylized sea creatures swim from the ocean
 \$25 for a 30 sq. ft. roll
 @houseofdesign.com

9- best nest
SANDOZCHARTERS
 Made of Uncoated paper
 Highlights: A faithful reproduction of an 1890s English design. About \$28 for a 30 sq. ft. roll; @sandozcharters.com

12- dog show
TRUST
 Made of Coated paper
 Highlights: Pencil sketches give this pattern a handmade look.
 \$43 for a 30 sq. ft. roll
 @houseofdesign.com
 for dealers

10- zebra print
TRUST
 Made of Coated paper
 Highlights: Show your stripes with exotic animals including a zebra
 \$50 for a 30 sq. ft. roll
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YOU'VE REACHED THE AGE WHERE GIVING UP ISN'T WHO YOU ARE.

So if you're like millions of men who have some degree of erectile dysfunction (ED), talk to your doctor. Ask about VIAGRA (sildenafil citrate), and see if America's most prescribed ED treatment is right for you. 30 million men already have.

For more information go to viagra.com or call 1-888-464-2472 (1-888-4VIAGRA).

THIS IS THE AGE OF TAKING ACTION. VIAGRA.

VIAGRA is prescription medication to treat erectile dysfunction (ED).

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION BELOW.

Do not take VIAGRA if you take nitrates, often prescribed for chest pain, as this may cause a sudden, unsafe drop in blood pressure.

Discuss your general health status with your doctor to ensure that you are healthy enough to engage in sexual activity. If you experience chest pain, nausea, or any other discomforts during sex, seek immediate medical help.

In the event of an erection lasting more than 4 hours, seek immediate medical help to avoid long-term injury. If you are older than age 65, or have serious liver or kidney problems, your doctor may start you at the lowest dose (25 mg) of VIAGRA. If you are taking prostate inhibitors, such as for the treatment of BPH, your doctor may recommend a 25-mg dose and may limit you to a maximum single dose of 25 mg of VIAGRA in a 48-hour period. If you have prostate problems or high blood pressure for which you take medicines called alpha blockers, your doctor may start you on a lower dose of VIAGRA.

In rare instances, men taking PDE5 inhibitors (oral erectile dysfunction medicines, including VIAGRA) reported a sudden decrease or loss of vision or hearing. If you experience sudden decrease or loss of vision or hearing, stop taking PDE5 inhibitors, including VIAGRA, and call a doctor right away.

VIAGRA should not be used with other ED treatments. VIAGRA should not be used with REVATIO or other products containing sildenafil.

VIAGRA does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, facial flushing, and upset stomach. Less commonly, bluish vision, blurred vision, or sensitivity to light may briefly occur.

Please see Important Facts for VIAGRA on the following page or visit viagra.com for full prescribing information.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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VIAGRA
 (sildenafil citrate) Pfizer

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IMPORTANT FACTS



IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT VIAGRA

Never take VIAGRA if you take any medicines with nitrates. This includes nitroglycerin. Your blood pressure could drop quickly. It could lead to an stroke or life-threatening event.

ABOUT ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION (ED)

Erectile dysfunction means a man cannot get or keep an erection. Health problems, injury or side effects of drugs may cause ED. The cause may not be known.

ABOUT VIAGRA

VIAGRA is used to treat ED in men. When you want to have sex, VIAGRA can help you get and keep an erection when you are sexually excited. You cannot get an erection just by taking the pill. Only your doctor can prescribe VIAGRA.

VIAGRA does not cure ED.

VIAGRA does not protect you or your partner from STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) or HIV. You still need to use a condom. VIAGRA is not a treatment for hypertension.

WHO IS VIAGRA FOR?

Who should NOT take VIAGRA?

Men who have ED and whose heart is healthy enough for sex.

Who should NOT take VIAGRA?

- If you are taking medicines with nitrates.
 - Medicines that treat chest pain (angina), such as nitroglycerin or isosorbide mononitrate or dinitrate.
- If you are on some street drugs, such as "poppers" (don't abuse it or abuse).
- If you are allergic to anything in the VIAGRA tablet.

BEFORE YOU START VIAGRA

Tell your doctor if you have or ever had:

- Heart attack, chest pain, heartburn, or stroke.
- Heart problems, such as heart failure, chest pain, angina, or aortic valve narrowing.
- Low or high blood pressure.
- Severe vision loss.
- An eye condition called retinitis pigmentosa.
- Difficulty in swallowing.
- Blood problems, such as sickle cell anemia or leukemia.
- A delayed penis. Penile prosthesis or no erections that lasted more than 4 hours.
- Severe vision or any kind of hearing problems.

Tell your doctor about all your medicines, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Tell your doctor if you take or use:

- Medicines called alpha blockers to treat high blood pressure or prostate problems. Your blood pressure could suddenly get too low. You could get dizzy or faint. Your doctor may start you on a lower dose of VIAGRA.
- Medicines called phosphodiesterase inhibitors for ED. Your doctor may prescribe a 25 mg dose. Your doctor may take VIAGRA to 25 mg in a 48-hour period.
- Other methods to treat erections. These include pills, the penile implant, or pump.
- A medicine called REVATIO®. VIAGRA should not be used with REVATIO or REVATIO contains sildenafil. Use some medicine found in VIAGRA.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIAGRA

Side effects are mostly mild to moderate. They usually go away after a few hours. Some of these are more likely to happen with higher doses.

The most common side effects are:

- Headache
- Flushing (redness)
- Upset stomach
- Low vision side effects are:

- Trouble seeing blue and green objects or things like traffic lights.
- Eyes being more sensitive to light.
- Blurred vision.

Usually, a meal or other food will help. VIAGRA has reported some side effects:

- Stomach upsets that last more than 4 hours. If this happens it may mean you're taking too much. Stop taking VIAGRA until you feel better.
- Sudden decrease in vision at night or in the morning. We do not know if these events are caused by VIAGRA and medicines like it or caused by other factors. If you have trouble seeing things like traffic lights or other things, stop taking VIAGRA and all medicines like it. Call your doctor for advice.
- Sudden decrease in vision. We do not know if these events are caused by VIAGRA and medicines like it or caused by other factors. If you have trouble seeing things like traffic lights or other things, stop taking VIAGRA and all medicines like it. Call your doctor for advice.
- Heart attack, stroke, irregular heartbeat, and death. We do not know whether these events are caused by VIAGRA or caused by other factors. Most of these happened in men who already had heart problems.

If you have any of these problems, stop VIAGRA. Call your doctor right away.

HOW TO TAKE VIAGRA

Do:

- Take VIAGRA only the way your doctor tells you. VIAGRA comes in 25 mg, 50 mg, and 100 mg tablets. Your doctor will tell you how much to take.
- If you are over 65 or have serious liver or kidney problems, your doctor may start you at the lowest dose (25 mg).
- Take VIAGRA about 1 hour before you want to have sex. VIAGRA starts to work in about 30 minutes when you are sexually excited. VIAGRA lasts up to 4 hours.

Don't:

- Do not take VIAGRA more than once a day.
- Do not take more VIAGRA than your doctor tells you.
- If you don't get an erection with VIAGRA, talk with your doctor.
- Do not drink or use any other medicines before checking with your doctor.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- This is only a summary of important information. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for complete product information (PI).
- Go to www.fda.gov/cder/rdmt/viagra or call (800) 4-VIAGRA (464-2476).



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Traditional-meets-modern dining space

Playful mid-century pieces lighten up a designer's family-friendly bungalow

BY CELSIAN BARNIE • PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN GRAMON

AN INFUSION OF modern fixtures and furnishings will breathe freshness into any traditional space. Consider this family hangout, where a doodle-ready chalkboard—the starting point for the design—is set alongside flat-panel wallcovering with a coiffed ceiling overhead. The needs table reflects the 1904 home's Caribbean ethos, while curvy Danish pedestal lights and Hans Wegner chairs play off the classic midcentury. “We love modern, beautifully designed things, and we also love old buildings,” says homeowner and designer Kim Clements, creative director of Seattle-based J.A.S. Design Build. “It’s all about authenticity and function.” The chairs are comfortable, the lights cast a warm, glow. And there’s always room for one more at the table. Like to create a similar mix? Read on.

withhose chairs

The curved back of this well-proved take on an iconic 1949 design makes it comfortable for snuggling around the table. \$329 www.hick.com

band-wearing floors

Get the handpainted look easy way with prefabricated sapswoodlook boards that stick in place. \$3.29 per sq. ft. lumberliquidators.com

pedestal server

A simple white cabanconetto plate carries the same stripes into the sideboard. Pedestal plate, \$25. www.ikea.com



get this look for less

fun doses of color

Clements chose fresh palettes of greens and blues for the walls and table base. Russian Olive C2 913 and Maine C2 685. \$45 per gallon. c2paint.com



mid-century lamp

The pendant lights are PPH lamps, a design produced since 1958. This one, with its semicircular forest shape, is a fraction of the price. \$159. lampglass.com



a corked bottle

Serve DJ in a glass bottle for a bright morning start. \$7. www.etsy.com



trestle table

The homeowner's custom table is topped with talleged wood. Paint the base of this one for a similarly bold effect. \$1,200. wayfair.com



striped rug

The notes for do-it-yourself on this indoor-outdoor rug are easy to keep close. \$200. overstock.com



DIY

DIY chalkboard

The homeowner is a fan of their salvaged table from a school, but it's easy to find a whitewashed chalkboard with supplies from the home center. Brush two coats of chalkboard paint directly on the drywall or plaster. Then it's time to paint with flat stock. Whisking. Create a ledge for shells with some shaped molding that has a curved profile you can't find buying spread. ■



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Demystifying LEDs

For those with nagging questions, we've got answers

BY JOHN MORRIS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY TED MORRISON

MAYBE YOU'VE ALREADY DONE the right thing and swapped out all your energy-sucking incandescents and not-so-universally-savvy CFLs for long-lasting, mercury-free, energy-saving LED bulbs. More likely, you're dropped in a few here and there, with around needs. LED bulbs can still be cold, shape-bulking things with odd shapes, spiky fins, and clanking price tags. But they keep getting better—and cheaper. If you haven't already, now is the time to start making the switch, and we're going to explore how and why.

The first LED bulbs I tried made my living room look like a hospital ward. How do I avoid that stark white light?

Newer models do a better job of diffusing the tiny directional beams that LEDs generate. But even so, you may want to start with lower-lumen (meaning less bright) bulbs. LED bulbs—which house electronic circuits and light-emitting diodes that act as semiconductors rather than filaments—now come in "color temperatures," indicating warm tones that mimic incandescent bulbs and flatter furnishings, such as varnished wood. Interestingly, cooler ones are often recommended for outdoors because they bring out the green in foliage, says Seattle-based lighting designer Christopher Thompson.



There's enough small print on the package to blind a lawyer. Call you translate? Look for the requisite Lighting Facts label, which costs the Kelvin (K) rating: The closer to the lower end of 2700K, the warmer the light (yes, that does sound backward). Bulbs are also rated for their ability to render color accurately using what is called the Color Rendering Index (CRI). Incandescents, which do especially well with warmer colors, score 100. You may want to check the manufacturer's website for the CRI rating, despite all that small print; it's not always on the package.

I'm confused about watts and lumens. Life was so much easier when I could replace one 60-watt bulb with another. Lumens are a better way to compare brightness.

Watts measure how much electricity a bulb draws, not light output, which varies since not all 60-watt incandescents are equally efficient. More important, 60-watt equivalent LED bulbs are way more efficient, since that light is cooler. So if you're shopping for a 60-watt equivalent, consider trying a 40-watt equivalent instead. Its 400 lumens may be bright enough.

I love my recessed cans but can't find an LED flood that has a broad, warm light. Look for an reflector bulb, such as the BR30 type, with a slight bulge near the base of the bulb. Instructions on the package should say whether the bulb is a spot, or a "flood," and may also include the angle of the light beam.

If you want a flood, look for an angle of more than 50 degrees or the acronym WFL for wide flood. (SP stands for spot.) Alternatives for recessed cans also include LED surface-mount-panel fixtures, such as ones made by Philips Lighting.

Another problem: The dimmer is no longer able to bring the light down. Traditional dimmers are often unable to operate LED bulbs. They may flicker or fail to respond—a syndrome known as "dimm-travel." In other words, dim a luminaire with a bulb labeled dimmable, and you've got. Go to the bulb maker's website to see which dimmers work with which bulbs—or consult the Edison LED Control Center of Excellence, which runs a toll-free hotline for frustrated consumers. 877-ED-LEDs. Smartphones may turn out

to be the ultimate solution. Philips already makes bulbs whose color and brightness are controlled by an app.

Can I stick an LED bulb in any fixture? Pretty much. Just match up your old bulbs, based on LED varieties, taking care to also compare lumens, or brightness levels. Given a lower lumen bulb may be more pleasing. Some new bulbs are surprisingly good at mimicking the familiar Edison and incandescent switch has introduced the first three-way LED bulb. To set the beam and make it less direct, manufacturers install multiple LEDs, reflectors, lenses, and diffusers within the bulb. Some bulbs look a little funny until you turn them on or put them behind a shade or inside a glass globe. But be aware that some LED bulbs cannot

be used inside enclosed fixtures or capped recessed fixtures. (Find the fix first.) As Ray Johnson, a staff scientist at 3M, explains, LED bulbs have "heat sinks"—fins or another way out for the heat generated when energy passes through the semiconductors—which help them use much less voltage and emit much less heat than incandescents do. But on the flip side, LEDs are more sensitive to their surrounding temperature and need a decent amount of airflow to keep cool. Overheating won't make a bulb explode, but it will shorten its life. As for cold temperatures: Unlike CFLs, LEDs do fine outdoors.

How about replacement for annual bulbs? Look for LED pin bulbs that can replace halogens, small bulbs for candle-style fixtures, and specialized LED fixtures, such as under-cabinet strip lights from companies like Kichler and Hinkley, and battery-operated lights for drawers and closets from the likes of GE and IKEA. Keep in mind that the aforementioned airflow issue has led to odd bulb shapes. Myles and her displays. Ask if the store has a no-questions-asked return policy. While you're at it, ask about the bulb's compatibility with your dimmer. And keep your receipts.

It tends to bother when someone leaves the light is on. But, it turns out, all that off and on wears out CFL bulbs. How about LEDs? Replaced off and on will not harm them or reduce their life expectancy, and energy is energy, so why waste it? But LEDs are energy movers, so no need to obsess about

turning them off every time you step out of the room.

Is there a best place to start? Swap in LEDs in areas where lights are on the longest, like the garage and porch, and any spot where changing the bulb is a pain: one of the great things about LEDs is how long they last, typically 25 years or longer. A \$10 LED bulb that meets EPA's Energy Star requirements and a left-on 3-hour a day will pay for itself in roughly two years, in California, in only one year. EPA experts say. To reduce the sticker shock of more expensive LEDs, take advantage of utility and other

rebates, which could reduce the price to \$5—possibly right in the store. For details, enter your ZIP code on the Special Offers and Rebates page at energy.gov.

Should be tempted by cheapo bulbs? Buyer beware. Though prices are falling, remember: The real thing holds a semiconductor, barely uses energy, and boasts a ridiculously long lifetime. Buy Energy Star bulbs and fixtures that have a three-year guarantee and meet performance standards like a minimum CRI rating of 80 and a 25,000-hour lifetime before EPA lists them into the club.

Now go ahead and let there be light. ■

A POST-EDISON SAMPLER

The selection keeps changing, and prices keep falling. Don't assume a dimmable bulb will work with your dimmer. Check the bulb maker's website.



GE 60-Watt LED 900 lumens
Along with the redesigned two-fluoride design, this bulb emits a warm white Energy Star label. It's the most efficient light bulb on the market. \$10. www.ge.com



Switch Lighting 60W A19 This bulb emits a warm white light. It's the most efficient light bulb on the market. \$10. www.switchlighting.com



Cree 60W LED This bulb emits a warm white light. It's the most efficient light bulb on the market. \$10. www.creeled.com



Philips Soft White R30 65W Dimmable Floodlight This warm white bulb is the most efficient light bulb on the market. \$10. www.philips.com



Great Value Soft White LED A19 This bright white bulb is dimmable and works with incandescent dimmers. \$9.99. www.walmart.com



Folk Electric Dimmable Chandelier bulb You'll want to dim this bulb. It's the most efficient light bulb on the market. \$10. www.folk.com

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Better turf with less work

Simplify your lawn-care routine for lush results without so much fuss. **BY GUY TRENG**



TOH SPRING, when longer days and warmer weather bring your yard back to life. All that growing up around you is easy to ignore, despite the fact that lawn care is a complex discipline of your lawn's health and your own budget. But we've got you covered with the help of our experts. They'll help you in every way possible for a happy, low-maintenance lawn. Don't do it! Because this is the time when the sun is shining, watering with extra fertilizer, or digging your eyes out in hopes of reducing an ugly patch can do more harm than good. They'll actually weaken grass, leaving it vulnerable to drought, weeds, and pests.

The good news is that you don't need to shell out overdrive to maintain lush turf. Turn the page for a long-term approach that will yield a more resilient and sustainable lawn—and save you time and trouble, too.

What are weeds trying to tell you?

These opportunistic plants pop up in response to a particular growing condition, one that's good for them but bad for your lawn's health. Use them as a guide to fending the state of your soil and taking back your turf.



CRABGRASS

CONDITION

Scuffed turf
FIX Raise the height of your mower blades.



COMMON PLANTAIN

CONDITION Wet or slow draining soil

FIX Reduce water by regrading for better drainage. Or replace the area of lawn with a more suitable.



WHITE CLOVER

CONDITION Low soil fertility

FIX Run a soil test and apply organic fertilizer as recommended.



KNOTWEED

CONDITION Compacted soil

FIX Aerate areas prone to heavy foot traffic yearly.



CREeping CHARLIE

CONDITION Too much shade

FIX Overseed with shade-tolerant grass varieties.

Let the grass grow a little bit. It's best to keep turf on the taller side: 3 to 4 inches high for cool-season grasses, such as fescue and Kentucky bluegrass, and 3 to 2 inches high for warm-season varieties, including Bermuda grass and centipede grass. Mowing lower than the recommended height, known as scalping, scorches grass blades. The damage makes grass can't deliver as much energy to the roots, causing them to atrophy. Without a deep, vigorous root system, turf is

less equipped to handle drought and crowd out competitors. Weed seeds easily take hold in the exposed, scorched soil of a scalped lawn, and insects and diseases move in while the lawn's defenses are down. While you might think that cutting short buys time between mowings, the opposite is true; scalping a lawn actually speeds up growth because the grass is eager to replace the foliage that's been removed.

On the flip side, you can also do damage by letting grass become so

overgrown that you're cutting off more than one-third of its length at any one time. Taking off that much top growth all at once also shocks the plant. Always cut your mower blades at the turf's recommended height, and keep them sharp to ensure clean cuts that heal quickly. (For a sharpening how-to, go to doellhouse.com/de184.)

Water deeply, less often

Running a sprinkler daily does a lawn no favors. Turf naturally

BUILD IT

Use thick oak boards and simple joinery to build a charming stand for coats and hats.

9997 \$300

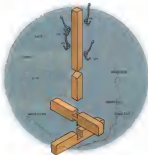
TIME 4 hours

DIFFICULTY Easy (but forming a snug lap joint requires precision)

1 **Make the feet.** Use a miter saw to size the parts according to the cut list at doellhouse.com/de184. You'll form the stand by crossing two feet of a half-lap joint. To mark your notch cutout lines, trace the width of the 1/4-inch stock across the top edge of each foot, shift its center. On the upper foot, use a square to transfer these lines to the opposite edge. To notch the top of the lower foot, cut your miter saw to stop at a depth of 1 1/2 inches. Use the saw to carefully cut along the inside of each line, then make a series of cuts between the two cuts. Clean up the bottom of the notch with a chisel and a rubber mallet. Use the same method to notch the upper foot, making a 1/4-inch-deep notch in the bottom and a 1/4-inch-deep notch in the top to accept the foot. To round off the top corners of the feet, trace the curve of a 1-quart paint can, cut the lines with a jigsaw, and sand the cuts smooth.

2 **Assemble the neck.** Glue the post with its base overhanging a workbench. Dry-fit the upper foot and mark the center axis. Using a drill/driver with a 1/4-inch combination square bit, drill through the upper foot and into the end of the post. Peg the foot off, apply wood glue to the face of the notch, and fasten the foot to the post with a 3-inch wood screw. Apply wood glue to the notch on the lower foot and clamp it in place, pressed with the upper foot, to form the stand.

3 **Finish the neck.** Use 220-grit paper to lightly sand the surface of the neck, and finish it in paint or stain. Install coat hooks on all four sides, aligning the heights to accommodate jackets and hats of different sizes.



BUY IT

Prior to pieces of post are hardwood construction and a wider range of finishes.

\$112

the half-lap model

A handsome coat rack built from black-finished in a rich brown stain. lowes.com



\$163

the neck range model

This sturdy stand is made from oak and comes in three different stains. theclaphouse.com



\$200

the h-vary model

A made-to-order option constructed from your choice of wood, cherry or oak. amazingtips.com



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Lumber Liquidators flooring has been seen on: **How to House**

weekend remodel

Build a rain barrel

Enclose a plastic bin with stock lumber to make a water-wise garden feature. **BY JOHN CARRY • PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUREA HOGGS**



COST \$70

TIME Two days

DIFFICULTY Easy This bin is simple to build and the correct size for a 5-gallon

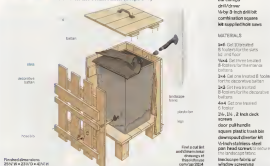
COLLECTING RAIN WATER is a no-brainer for gardening. It's the ugly black barrels we could do without. So here's a plan you can use to build your own rain barrel, one that's both eco-friendly and aesthetically pleasing. It's a simple project, thanks to an off-the-shelf downspout kit that connects to a downspout. The barrel is essentially a sturdy wood shell built around a repurposed plastic garbage bin that serves as the reservoir. Made of rot-resistant lumber, the barrel goes together with easy lap and butt joints and some deck screws. Decorative exterior fasteners dress it up, and you can concealer them and paint the barrel to fit any style of house or garden.

Follow along as *This Old House* contributor Christopher Bechtel, owner of *Perma*, a landscape-dormant company in Brooklyn, New York, leads you through the simple steps it takes to green up your garden.

Gutter connection (inset) © 2011 Rain Barrel Connection and Installation Kit with Downspout Adapter © 2011 rainbarrel.com

DAY-TO-DAY TIMELINE

SATURDAY Assemble the box (Steps 1–5)
SUNDAY Install the fan, attach the diverter and make the connections (Steps 6–7)



TOOLS

reflex saw
bar clamps
drill/driver
1/4-by-3/4-inch drill bit
combination square
kit supply-hole saw

MATERIALS

3-6-6 Get 3/4-in.-thick 8-footers for the sides, top, and floor
1-4-4 Get three treated 8-footers for the interior bottom
3-4-4 Get one treated 8-footer for the decorative bottom
3-2-2 Get two treated 8-footers for the decorative bottom
4-4-4 Get one treated 6-footer
2-6-12, 1-4-4, 2 1/2-inch deck screws
door pull handle
square, plastic trash bin
downspout diverter kit
1/4-in.-thick 1/2-in.-wide steel pan head screws to secure the landscape fabric
landscape fabric or window screening

2 BUILD THE BOX

A Assemble the sides. Set two bar clamps on your work surface and place outside with the flush battens between the jaws. Stand the two sides with inset battens into the clamps and tighten the assembly. Use a 1/4-inch bit in your drill/driver to make pilot holes along the corners—through the face of the studs of the upright sides and into the edges of those on the flat side, as shown. Secure the edges with 24-inch deck screws.

B Add the last side. Loosen the clamps, and stand the assembly up on your work surface. Set the fourth side in place, as shown. Drill pilot holes, and secure it to its adjoining sides.

C Install the floorboards. Measure the dimensions of the interior just above the lower battens, to get an accurate length for the floorboards. On your meter saw, cut four 3-by-6 pieces to length. With the box on its side, place a floorboard against the top edge of the lower battens, and secure it with 1 1/2-in.-deck screws, as shown. Install the other three floorboards.



1 MAKE THE SIDES

A Cut the studs and battens. On a meter saw, cut to length the 1-by-6 studs (six for the base). Also cut the four 4-in.-long battens.

B Assemble the parts. Lay out four 3-by-6 studs on your work surface. Place 1/4-inch spacers between the boards and clamp the assembly together. The interior battens sit 5/8 inch from the top and bottom of the studs. The pairs of battens for two sides are least 1 1/2 inches on either end to allow space for the battens of the other two sides when you flush to the edges of the studs. Secure the battens with 24-inch deck screws. Make the other three sides the same way.



3 MAKE THE BASE

A Cut the legs. On your meter saw, cut 4-in.-long lumber into the four legs that will support the box. Raucan make these leg pieces shorter or longer if the surface where you will install your barrel is sloped or irregular.

B Install the legs. Use a piece of 1/4-in.-thick plywood to keep the legs from the corner, and hold it up against the floor. With a 1/4-inch bit in your drill/driver, make two pilot holes through the stud and battens of the side and into the top portion of the leg. Drive 2 1/2-inch deck screws through those holes and into the legs. Repeat the process on the other face of the leg, then install the other three legs.



4 BUILD THE LID

A) Cut the boards. One side saw out the 2x6 lid rails and 1x4 battens to fit. Lay them out on your work surface with 1/4-inch spacers between the slats. Clamp the assembly together. Place the battens 2 inches from the ends and ends of the slats. Drill pilot holes and fasten the battens in place with 1 1/2-inch deck screws, two in each slot in an offset pattern.

B) Install the door-pull handle. Flip the lid over. Center the handle on the lid. Use your drill/driver and the fasteners that came with the handle to secure it.



SEE HOW IT'S DONE
To watch a video of this project, go to thisoldhouse.com/weekend



5 ADD DECORATIVE BATTENS

A) Lay out your design. Use your combination square to transfer guidelines around the board to make sure the ends of the battens meet correctly at the corners.

B) Cut the boards. On your miter saw, cut the battens for the decorative bands on the exterior of the barrel. The top band is made of 1x4 boards. The bottom two bands are 1x3. (Of course, you can choose any pattern you like.) Remember that two boards at each batten band are larger than the other two to allow for overlapping butt joints at the corners.

C) Attach the battens. Set the barrel vertically on your work surface with 1/4-inch scrap underneath. Place bar clamp over the top to hold a batten snug. Use your drill/driver with a 1/4-inch bit to make pilot holes, then secure the battens with 1 1/2-inch deck screws. Repeat the process on the other battens on that side. Rotate the bin on the work surface and repeat the process on the next side, and so on, until the battens completely lay around the barrel.



6 CUT THE OPENINGS

A) Make the inlet. Put the plastic bin inside the barrel. With a 1/4-by-3-inch bit in your drill/driver, make a hole through the barrel wall and through the bin so that the hole ends up 1 inch below the plastic rim. (Go through the inside at a slant.) Then, with the bit supplied hole saw in your drill/driver, follow the pilot hole and cut through the barrel. Remove the bin and make a matching hole in it using a reciprocating blade to get your head.

B) Make the outlet. Put the bin at the barrel. On the opposite side, use the same bit to drill a pilot hole through the barrel wall and the bin about 2 inches above the bottom of the bin. Remove the bin. Put the smaller bit supplied hole saw in your drill/driver, and, using the pilot hole as a guide, make matching holes in the barrel and the bin. Insert the threaded rubber grommet into the barrel as shown.

C) Install the hose bib. Since the walls of the bin slope away from the barrel, we attached the hose bib to a 1/4-inch by 2 1/2-inch board to provide a bridge for the pipe. The pipe runs through the barrel and the hole into the rubber grommet at the bottom to make a water-tight connection.



TIP: Cover the top of the plastic bin with landscape fabric or window screening to prevent mosquitoes from breeding in the water.



7 MAKE THE CONNECTIONS

A) Cut the downspout. Measure the finished height of the inlet hole in the barrel. For proper flow, locate a spot on your downspout 1 inch higher than the inlet. Using the bit supplied hole saw, drill a hole in the downspout. Watch the sharp edges and wear gloves when you cut the diverter valve. Set the barrel in place.

B) Connect the flexible hose. The lid comes with a length of hose. Insert one end at the hose into the diverter valve and the other through the barrel and into the side. Now do a little rain dance.



Recrafting a 1915 Craftsman

With the help of its can-do owners, a worn-out house gets back to its original spirited self



by Deborah Baldwin
photography by Victoria Pearson
produced by Colette Scanlon
styling by Sunday Henderson

R

ipping up floors, peeling out windows, wrenching with vice grips, sleeping in dust, eating out of a plastic bag—hey, “it makes a house your own,” says Pierre Radenabach, the house behind the sofa of the house he shares with his wife, Tami, in San Luis Obispo, California. “It means you own it, emotionally... There’s something primal about growing your own shelter. You can’t really delegate it.”

Easy for him to say. An unrepentant DIYer with a helper/enabler of a spouse, Pierre doesn’t mind crawling over yellowed linoleum adobe and scraping and he isn’t particularly fussy off—the floor crew uncle. Asked what it was like to strip layers of paint off panels,



visible new cook space: ABOVE, The hidden island is given front-center status here thanks to Craftsman windows. RIGHT, Other period touches—the low countertop, a wall-mount faucet—blend with the latest appliances, including a happy old burner range and a painted dishwasher



perfect fit ABOVE, Pierre and Tami Radenabach took the island prep space, which doubles as a dining spot for items from the wide island above ledge. To create a smooth buffer flow around the sink, they chiseled 5 inches off the countertop depth and recessed the dishwasher 4 inches into the wall.

recently century-old brick and Douglas fir, the couple was philosophical. “It was stylish to paint woodwork white in the 1930s,” Pierre says graciously. Tami adds, both of them laughing, “Upturning it is a lot of work!”

The two long ago earned their cool belts. At 15, early achiever Pierre topped out his parents’ kitchen while they were visiting Europe. More recently, he and Tami measured a ranch house, where they raised their kids.

At that point, most couples would retire. But as time they began craving the creativity work—something compact and a little study, with history and character, within walking distance of town. They found it one day while driving down a street lined with an architect’s walking tour’s worth of older homes: a Craftsman-Prairie mix hiding behind a Fox Satt sign. “I yelled ‘Stop!’” Tami says. “Laterally.”

They backed up and took a look. The house was in off shape, with new siding that hadn’t worn

well, and it was also overpriced. But the place, with its early version of an open plan, radiated potential. Built in 1915 by William J. Smith, who had a hand in the construction of William Randolph Hearst’s San Simeon estate, it had held on to its original low-pitched gables, exposed rafters, truss, windows with upper double lights, and quarters-walk front door. In an unusual, charming touch, the second floor stepped back, as if to say, “This cross-gabled house is not a hangover.”

“We made a bid, which was rejected,” Tami says, “then a few months later went back. This time they accepted it if we took the house ‘as is.’” As an ongoing plan, living, read—you know the rest.

Soon enough, they were moved in and up to their elbows in paint-bubbling heat guns, chemical peels, and infrared warming devices. “You want something that can handle lead paint safely,” Pierre says. “It can’t quit.”

The original floor plans were long gone, but



beneath all that paint ABOVE: After launching a stripping, sanding, and staining campaign, the homeowners were able to reveal the dining room's original woodwork. They added the beaded glass doors to the built-ins, matching them to the windows

accenting the grain BELOW: Pumpkin-colored place settings bring out reddish undertones in the new oak sideboard



there was able to save them out, partly by studying old building permits. Previous owners had enclosed a screened porch and added a laundry room and bunk at the rear and a first-floor bedroom on one side. The one-story addition was vintage 1950s, and the new owners saw no reason to save them. However, they also saw no reason to rethink the existing layout, deciding instead to rebuild the additions and cap them with a new master suite.

Perre did all the framing, sheathing, roof angles and waterproofing. He leased a hit on Farm for help with insulation and drywall, then did all the painting, while spacing on hand of his work to seasoned pros.

The couple took a similar period-sensitive yet practical approach to the kitchen, a sunny spot they wanted save everything, plus a breakfast room for two nooks. With a pro inside and outside the walls, they did all the demolition and design. "We picked up 18 inches by conserving as much of a chimney that

once served a wood-burning stove," says Perre, who dragged a new burner range into the old stove's place, fendering the new hood duct up to the roof through the chimney's remains.

The quest for space didn't stop there. To make room for an expanded run of cabinets and counter-top on the back wall, the couple took out a room-dividing peninsula. Then they "cheated out" the cabinet by 3 inches, which meant having to curve a miter in the wall for the dishwasher. "In the 1950s, counters were only 18 to 20 inches deep, which explains the existence of the wall-mount faucet," Perre notes.

All of that left enough space for a narrow island, which in turn provided a landing spot for loading and unloading a 48-inch-wide fridge on the facing wall.

For Perre, who runs a graphic design firm, the kitchen's multi-by-inch sides were not sacrificing weekends and evenings for so long months. "We had very



at a snap ABOVE: Before adding period-style furnishings and lighting their first set of lights, the owners had to strip paint off the brick mantel and have a crew take apart the chimney and linings, which had suffered from decades of settling

floor plan

During this whole process, Perre dragged a new burner range into the old stove's place, fendering the new hood duct up to the roof through the chimney's remains. To make room for an expanded run of cabinets and counter-top on the back wall, the couple took out a room-dividing peninsula. Then they "cheated out" the cabinet by 3 inches, which meant having to curve a miter in the wall for the dishwasher. "In the 1950s, counters were only 18 to 20 inches deep, which explains the existence of the wall-mount faucet," Perre notes.



SHOP THIS STYLE
To find furniture like the one in this house, visit www.houzz.com or go to www.houzz.com

rooms with a view
RIGHT The compact
 master suite opens to a
 balcony overlooking the
 backyard. A walk-through
 closet has openings on
 each side of the bed



Light and bright **ABOVE LEFT** The period-inspired master bath is set up for peaceful morning sties under a skylight that channels light into a sophisticated stairwell. **ABOVE RIGHT** Oversize windows on the facing wall deliver not only daylight but also leafy balcony views.

simple math," Kern says. "We put the old lodge in the dining room, and I had a Crackpot and antique frytopan." She pauses, thinking back. "We had to wash dishes in the upstairs bathtub. That was the worst, bending over that tub."

After the great finally settled, "Our first meal was Thanksgiving," Paine recalls. "The plaster was walking out as the guests were walking in."

The couple's preservation-minded labor was rewarded when the town awarded the house historic status, yielding a roughly two-thirds cut in their property taxes.

By then the two had been herding construction jobs for nearly six years. As they had made their way from waitress and fire-place restoration to peat-stick infection and bedroom-closet configurations, "We slept in every room, including the dining room," Kern says.

With their tax savings, they were able to turn attention to the exterior. They rebuilt an eating back

porch, adding a deck, and built a new patio in front. Paine replaced the roof, and Paine rehabbed the second floor. A plasterer gave the first-floor siding a rough-textured "pebble dash" cement finish matched to a scrap of original siding found under a porch.

The interior updates were done with reverence for the original builder, not to mention a note when building materials were meant to last. "Sold 1-by-12 sheathing under the plaster, beautiful old growth timber—it blows me away," says Paine.

No wonder the couple winced when it came time to hang a flat-screen. "We couldn't shade putting it over the fireplace," says Paine, perhaps recalling the weeks they'd spent scanning the links. So they hid it in the former den.

But by far, the little bangalore had become the perfect nest. But forget embracing a period piece. While the Craftsman idea may date back a century, web to design firm and compact, open feel, Paine notes, "It's pretty much what we want today." ■



Fruit-bearing plants—like tomatoes, cucumbers, and the eggplants seen above—do best with five to six hours of direct sun a day.

Troubleshooting Your Vegetable Garden

You planted your favorites, then planned a season's worth of farm-to-table meals around your anticipated bounty. But you wound up with a harvest of bitter lettuce, cracked tomatoes, crooked carrots, and no idea where you went wrong.

Don't toss those menus yet. *This Old House* surveyed gardeners around the country about quandaries ranging from no-show seedlings to overgrown zucchinis.

Follow our advice on how to overcome them, and you'll be prepared to get this gardening season off to a fresh start—and a delicious finish.

BY JEANINE HUBER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATIE HOLLAND

BROCCOLI, CABBAGE & KALE

QUANDARY:

The leaves are riddled with tiny holes.

CAUSE: Fire beetles. They look like black or brown pinheads, about 1/8 inch long, and as if you were your hand over them.

CURE: These pests are a common problem for mustard family plants (the broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, and kale) as well as nightshade family members (such as potatoes, tomatoes, and eggplant). Tender seedlings are most vulnerable to all sorts of insect infestation, so it's smart to start with transplants, which are harder. Here's a helpful trick to try: Grow a diverse plant between heavy leaf types, such as tobacco, which fire beetles don't like. Insect traps also work; you can make one by spreading 1/4 cup of a sticky organic compound sold at garden centers onto cardboard and hanging from plant to plant, luring the invaders to their doom.

QUANDARY:

My cabbage heads are splitting.

CAUSE: They may have been overwatered (don't let your soil dry). Mother Nature's also angry. Or they might just be too mature.

CURE: If you don't twist (yep, all your cabbages at once) and you want to leave heads in the garden after they form, gently pull down the stems to break some of the root hairs limiting how much water the plant can absorb.



QUANDARY:

I yanked out a wilted bunch of kale and discovered bumpy, swollen roots rather than the normal mass of fine ones.

CAUSE: Clubroot, a fungal disease.
CURE: The fungus that causes clubroot can persist in the soil for a long time, so avoid growing plants from the mustard family in that area for at least seven years.



Plant sweaters the flavor of Lucerne (aka fava beans) which was grown in Thomas Jefferson's Monticello garden.

ZUCCHINI

QUANDARY:

The vines are smothering everything in their path, and the squash look like baseball bats.

CAUSE: You were even closer to your estimate of how many of these robust vines you really needed—and then picked a cooler at harvest time.

CURE: If your garden is tight on space, and you're in this bind, and look for a bit of trouble with zucchini that you might like. Fudrunk and Akle. Compact varieties can even be grown in containers. If you go with the old-fashioned vines, control the common age to plant every second or third. Limit yourself to a couple of plants. Then pick the zucchinis before three times a week when they are between 6 and 8 inches long. Harvesting often encourages the plants to get back to the business of growing flowers, which eventually yield a larger quantity of squash.



Compact bush varieties of zucchini like Tigris (shown) are good choices for small gardens.



Plant legumes like peas or beans after a season or two to help restore nutrients to the soil.

PEAS, BEANS & CORN

QUANDARY:

My dream garden has vanished. Where peas or beans or corn were planted, there are now just holes pecked in the soil or pieces of half-eaten seedlings.

CAUSE: The early bird got the worm.

CURE: Some growers wait a month for the season. Some modern pests play off the fact that birds are distracted by reflective. Check out your local birdhouse, and place reflective tape (glue it to the sides) or shiny mylar in every few feet. Or cover beds with row covers until seedlings are several inches tall. Only Herman, a professor on San Diego Island, Washington, used this camouflage trick. "I planted pea seeds at between-pot and pea plants. The birds fell for me and did not feed the tiny seedlings between the more established plants." Result: A great crop!

QUANDARY:

Seeds sprout and look full of promise. Then, zing! One morning, it looks like someone came through with a razor blade and cut all the young plants down at soil level.

CAUSE: Cutworms—flat caterpillars that burrow in the soil or hide under leaves during the day and come out at night to feed on the plants.

CURE: Cutworms can do severe damage in spring, before they turn into adult moths. Seedlings are especially vulnerable. You can start peas and beans early in pots and transplant them to the bed once the seedlings are harder. Keep cutworms from reaching tender stems by sticking a bag of dirt or mulch along each row, and protect them with cardboard collars.



How to Avoid Trouble Before It Starts

REINVENT YOUR SOIL. You can reduce the risk of soil-borne problems by adding 3 to 4 inches of new organic members of the same botanical family at a plot where they've grown before. Potatoes, beets, and fungal diseases tend to plague all members of a particular family. When you remove their roots, they die off. Rotting crops are especially helpful for the nightshade family (such as tomatoes and peppers), mustard family crops (including cabbages and kale), and even fava beans (lentils). Get a black plastic mulch cover. You'll find a cover crop, such as clover, for a season. When you eventually hoe it right into the soil, "it's like a dose of vitamins and nutrients for the garden," says Christine Mason, a professor at Atlanta. "It keeps the good microbes and the earthworms happy."

WATERING IS. Water deeply, using deep irrigation or watering cans with a sliding head held close to the soil. Take it slow and give it 10 to 15 minutes, which can make a difference. Dig down the soil and around the plant with your finger to make sure that it's moist to the touch around the roots, and just on the surface. And keep the soil well-aerated and perforate (or mulch) like decomposed leaves (mulch is not compost) or whatever is available where you live) to reduce weeds and preserve moisture.

TAKE FIVE. Colin McCre, founder of the Seattle Urban Farm Company, is a landscaping firm that specializes in home vegetable gardens. He's learned that they do better spending 15 minutes a day tending their plots than devoting an entire weekend to them once a month. When weeds are tiny, you can remove them easily. Vigilance also helps you to spot and act on insect and disease symptoms early. And you're more likely to harvest vegetables in their prime.

64

IMPORTANT NUMBERS EVERY HOMEOWNER SHOULD KNOW

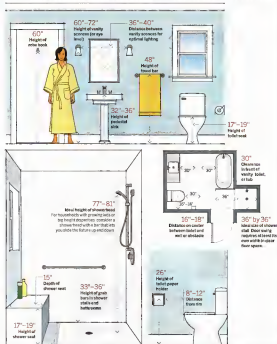
Some spaces just feel good, and you can't put your finger on why. Chances are, it's because everything is where it should be: Handles are easy to reach, drawers open unobstructed, there's light where you need it. The key is knowing the right numbers. Our room-by-room guide takes the guesswork out of where to hang that towel rack or how long a curtain rod to buy. Whether you're starting fresh or just adding a few upgrades, your home is sure to measure up.

By Nicole Oyer
Illustrations by Arthur Mount

THE BATH

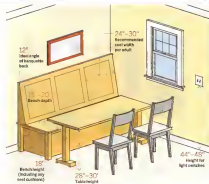
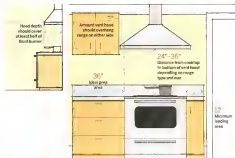
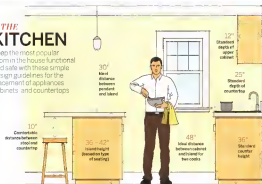
Push for inch the bathroom packs in more functionality than any other room in the house. With scant space to hide mistakes, though, even tiny miscalculations can create big problems—not to mention compromise safety. For maximum comfort, convenience, and ability, keep these magic numbers in mind.

A NOTE ON THE NUMBERS. The recommended dimensions and clearances are based on national building and design industry guidelines. You can—and should—adapt them to your own size, circumstances and preferences. Just be sure to comply with local building codes to ensure your safety.



THE KITCHEN

Keep the most popular room in the house functional and safe with these simple design guidelines for the placement of appliances, cabinets and countertops



BREAKFAST BARS AND ISLANDS

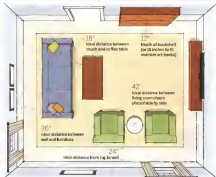
The right amount of overhanging island seating generally comes in three heights: 18 inches (30 inches) counter (36 inches) and bar (42 inches). Each one requires different amount of overhanging (also called knee space) for diners to sit comfortably. The higher the seating, the less knee space needed. See these recommended dimensions from the National Kitchen and Bath Association.

SEATING HEIGHT	SEATING WIDTH
42 inches	12 inches
36 inches	15 inches
30 inches	18 inches



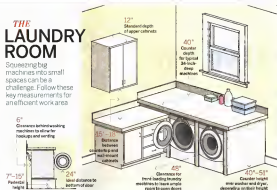
THE LIVING ROOM

Whether your social area is big or small, the secret to a comfortable room for entertaining TV watching, or just hanging out is judicious spacing.



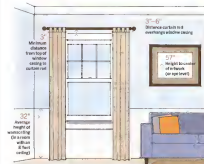
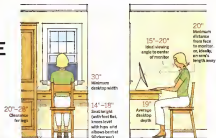
THE LAUNDRY ROOM

Squeezing big machines into small spaces can be a challenge. Follow these key measurements for an efficient work area.



THE HOME OFFICE

To boost productivity, create an ergonomic setup that maximizes both comfort and function.



SCREEN SENSE

The best TV size is a game changer. For optimizing, size your TV based on its distance from the sofa. Tap the minimum screen size in inches, it sets the viewing distance by 3 for the maximum, or multiply by 1.5. Always choose a TV that meets or exceeds the minimum screen size. Add a 15- to 20-degree viewing angle to the center of the screen.

Screen Size	Viewing Distance
40 inches	5 to 8 feet
46 inches	6 to 10 feet
52 inches	7 to 12 feet

<ALL ABOUT> Hydrangeas

For generations, these beloved shrubs have charmed with their big blooms and carefree nature. Find out which varieties are right for you and how to keep them thriving by ANNE W. KERR

PERFECTION doesn't really exist in the plant world—or in any places where living things thrive. But hydrangeas come pretty close. With long-lasting blue, violet, pink, white, or charcoale blooms and a sweeping disposition, these reliable summer-flowering shrubs look right at home in a wide range of situations, from carefree cottage gardens to more formally landscaped ones. When many other flowering shrubs and perennials have passed their peak, these deciduous beauties continue their season-long performances, with abundant, vibrant gas-bling flowers that dry to shades of lace for autumn and winter interest.

For all their versatility and showmanship, hydrangeas are not particularly picky about where you plant them. They'll happily grow in just about any landscape that offers well-drained soil, moisture, and some shade during the hottest part of the day. New varieties have even been bred to rebloom throughout the season. They're a no-brainer trouble-free players in gardens of previous generations, like floppy flowers. You can find types with colorful fall foliage and smaller stature, perfect for small yards. There are varieties that bear more sun tolerance and are cold hardier, too. So if you haven't explored the nursery lately and wonder if these old-fashioned garden lovelies are right for you, this is the place to find out.

Bigleaf hydrangeas (shown) are found in gardens across the United States, but the looser shrub actually hails from Japan. North America has its own native species, however! Both deciduous and smooth hydrangeas grow naturally in our eastern woodlands.



VITALS

WHERE DO THEY GROW? Hydrangeas hold the record in USDA Hardiness Zones 4 to 9. They do well in acidic soil as well as alkaline soils. In the many flower regions, they tolerate both sun and shade.

WHEN TO BUY? Like all air-lifted hydrangeas, they are best planted in spring or fall when temperatures are mild. Summer planting is more costly but with plenty of water and some shade, the plant will bloom the next year.



HOW MUCH CARE? After planting, maintenance is key. At first, hydrangeas need watering and mulching. After flowering, they need pruning.

ARE THEY PET-SAFE? Hydrangeas are safe for cats and dogs. All hydrangeas contain a toxic compound called cyanogenic glycosides, which can cause mild stomach upset in cats and dogs.

WHAT DO THEY COST? A 3-gallon pot goes for \$20 to \$30, depending on the variety.

Ways to use them

Versatility is one of the hydrangea's greatest attributes. There's a variety for practically every spot in the yard.

1- AS A TREE Pericle hydrangea naturally grows as shrubs, but a little pruning can turn them into trees or standards, making room for more plantings at their feet. *P. paniculata* (shown) (shown) is commonly called *FireTree*. Taken as a columnar tree form. Towering up to 30 feet it boasts white summer flowers that mature to rose, while leaves turn fiery, such as *Limelight*. Top out at 8 feet.



2- TO CLIMB A STRUCTURE Any garden structure looks lovely with a vine scrambling up it. *Plena* climbing hydrangea near arbutus or scaling a wall where you'll enjoy its heavily scented flowers. And guests will want something plenty to cling to. Such as a trellis or arbor will be a large tree trunk. Stems of vines include variegated *Flax* and its lovely, sweet cousin *Monique*.

3- IN TIGHT SPACES Thanks to its many heavily colored flowers, hydrangea is a great choice for tight spaces. It's easier than ever to make room for hydrangeas. If your yard has only a little space to spare, consider trying the 3-foot-tall *Wendy* with its profuse, glowing flowers (shown). The iconic pink or blue *Endless Summer* (shown) is also a great choice. *Limelight* is a white-flowering variety with chartreuse foliage.



4- IN A CONTAINER Planted in pots, hydrangeas can bring beauty to patios or decks. Compact varieties, such as *PennyMac* (shown), work especially well and help conserve a full look. Just be sure your shrubs get good drainage and plenty of water. Perked plants dry out faster than ones in the ground.



Fixes for common woes

Although hydrangeas are usually trouble-free, poor growing conditions occasionally result in less than lovely shrubs.



WILTING FOLIAGE > doesn't always mean drought. If the plant's leaves are wilted and its feet are wet, you've likely caused root rot by overwatering. Leaves might also wilt in high heat or full sun. In this case, they'll recover overnight. But if it happens daily, it's more to a shaded locale in order.



YELLOWING LEAVES > often signal a nutrient deficiency. If only new foliage is affected, the

plant may need more iron. This condition is called chlorosis and often occurs where soils have a high pH. Amending the soil with chelated iron and mixing in some compost will correct the issue. If only older leaves are yellowing, however, try fertilizing. The shrub may need nitrogen.



CHUNKY FOLIAGE > is a symptom of powdery mildew. It might look like a dusting of confectioner's sugar, but it's actually a fungal disease. Plants growing in areas with high humidity and poor air circulation are especially vulnerable. Transplanting or pruning back neighboring plants can help. In conditions in your shrub's favor, as can removing any affected foliage or fail to prevent the disease from worsening over.



NO BLOOMS > has several causes. Pruning at the wrong time of year and constantly topping off buds is a common culprit. Use an extra-leaky weeder or a planting net with too much shade are also possible causes.



COMPANION PLANTINGS

All great plant combinations play on similarities and differences. Most of us think of hydrangeas as teams of flowers, but they also offer bold textures with their rounded leaves and big blooms. As you select neighbors for your shrub, opt for ones that repeat or contrast with some of these features. The following pairings do a little of both, match your shrub with one or more for a no-fail combo.

• **Ferns** Most are fine-textured and vine-shaped, contrasting nicely with the hydrangea's bold, round leaves. Two tried-and-true picks are cherry ghost fern or creeps on soft shade fern (shown).

• **Ornamental grasses** Their airy leaves make a mounting contrast point to the hydrangea's dense, meaningful foliage. Consider pairing a hydrangea with *Korean feather reed grass*, which thrives in part shade and sports perky plumes in summer.

• **Hostas** The trailing leaves of this classic shade dweller echo those of every hydrangea except oakleaf, while their hot red and cool blue create contrast. Try pairing a blue-flowering hydrangea, for instance, with a gold-leaved hosta, or a blue-leaved hosta with a shrub that blooms pink. ■

PROPAGATE TO MULTIPLY YOUR RICHES

If you have one shrub, you can multiply it more by using this simple method called layering. In spring or early fall, select a low, flexible stem almost parallel to the ground. Leave foliage of only the top 12 inches of the branch and strip off the rest. Bury the leafless section several inches deep. Leaving the top 12 inches of stem above ground. Use a rock to keep the buried



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Fence

Our centipede grass has brown spots with a thick layer of dead grass underneath. Fertilizing and raking don't help. What can I do to make my lawn green again?

—JUSTIN FARNWORTH, JACKSON, S.C.



With a rich patch
of a power-law
Roger Cook
charts up the
mower that is
preventing water
drainage and
nutrients from
reaching the soil.

ROGER COOK REPLIES: Centipede grass is a tough, slow-growing species well suited to many warm, wet climates. But in with many other grasses, it is susceptible to a layer of thatch—dead grass—that accumulates just beneath the grass blades. When thatch gets too thick, it blocks water, oxygen, and nutrients from reaching the soil and encourages roots to grow near the surface, making them more vulnerable to heat and cold, drought, disease, and being scalped by a mower. Adding more fertilizer only thickens the thatch. Luckily, the cure is simple. Rip it out, a process called dethatching.

To see if your lawn needs to be dethatched, dig up a small clump, shake off the soil, and measure the thickness of the fibrous layer at the base of the grass. (While you're at it, gather a soil sample and have it tested so that you know its pH, nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus levels for later.) A thatch layer up to half an inch thick is good—it insulates the soil and retains moisture. But if it's 1 inch or thicker, you need to take action.

Timing is crucial. When you live, plan to dethatch in early spring, before the heat and dryness set in. (The same goes for drought-prone species that thrive in dry climates, such as Kentucky bluegrass, creeping red fescue, and creeping bent-

grass. My cue is when the dorythia starts blooming at the end of April.) In areas with winters colder than yours, centipede grass should be dethatched in late May or early June, when it's growing vigorously.

If you have a small lawn, less than 1,000 square feet, all you need is a dethatching rake and a strong back. For larger lawns, rent a gas-powered dethatcher or power rake. Have the blades' spacing set to 2 to 3 inches and adjust their depth to 1/4 inch. Make only parallel passes across your lawn, and be careful to lift the blades when making a turn. Use a leaf blower to clean away the debris that a dethatcher kicks up (it makes great compost). Then water, seed, and, if the soil just calls for it, apply fertilizer and lime. For spring raindrops, I use fertilizer containing Yagreen, a crabgrass suppressant that still allows turfgrass seeds to germinate.

To prevent thatch from coming back, mow it between 1 and 2 inches high. (Most other grasses should be left longer to spur root growth.) And be stingy with the nitrogen during mid-season feedings no more than a pound per 1,000 square feet per year. Even better, water occasionally with compost tea, and, in the fall, aerate the soil, then top-dress it with 1/4 inch of compost. The macroorganisms in the compost speed the breakdown of thatch into soil.

Dethatching is a stressful treatment for any lawn, wait a couple of years before doing it again.

Fix a sagging gate

Our fence gate sags and won't latch properly. Relocating the latch helped for a while, but it's sagging again. Is there a more permanent solution?

—BENJAMIN FRANK, TEXAS

What is it?

• Circular saw guide

• Ladder support for paint tray

• Shelf bracket

• Table-saw pushstick

FOR THE
HIT PAINT JOB



INCORRECT
The gate above sags because its braces aren't oriented correctly. Note how they are properly placed in the gate at right.



Cork floor care

We just removed the carpet that covered the original cork floors in our 1920s house. Can the cork be restored or would it be better to replace it?

—SUE RAIMER, CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OHIO

KEVIN O'CONNOR REPLIES: According to David Schmitt, director of training and technical services at Bona US, a maker of floor-care products, you should be able to get the old cork back in shape. "If dethatching a cork floor isn't all that different from re-finishing a hardwood floor," he says.

First, make sure that the floor is at least 1/4 inch high. "An easy way to check a floor's thickness is to lift up a floor joist," he says. Given the age of your house, Schmitt suspects that your cork is solid and therefore plenty thick. Some newer cork flooring has a wear layer thinner than 1/4 inch, so it would be re-finished.

If your cork is thick enough, hire a flooring contractor to "scuff" or "dew" the surface using a buffer fitted with a sanding screen. Schmitt says a drossander, typically used to refinish hardwood flooring, would be too aggressive. Some finer removers

The brackets meet fit snugly between the rails, so he has to make these cuts precisely. To do that, lay each 2x4 in position over both rails, then use the rail as a guide to mark the cutlines on the back of each brace. Make the cuts on the waste side of the line, you can shave a little more off, if necessary, for a tight fit. To attach each brace, drive two screws through each of the vertical boards at crosses. Make sure all the other fasteners on the gate are tight. Now you can remove the prop. The door should stay where it belongs—and latch easily.

QUESTION
OF THE
MONTH

000000

the ground-in dirt and old finish and opens up the work for a new finish. If the acetone gums up with wax, a common coating on cork years ago, the floor should be stripped before commencing. The safest finish for a previously waxed cork floor is a new coat of wax, anything else may not adhere reliably.

As for wax-free cork floors, Schartz says they can be protected in one of two ways. You can apply a penetrating floor oil to even out the color, followed by a coat of hard wax oil. Or you can stain the cork, apply a floor sealer to reduce top-coat penetrations, then cover with two coats of a polyurethane, as you would a wood floor. He says a polyurethane stands up well to foot traffic but is difficult to repair if it wears through. Hard wax oil, like wax, is easy to scuff but wears away fairly quickly in high-traffic areas.

Whichever route you choose, Schartz recommends following the contractor's regular maintenance guidelines and setting up a contract with him or her to keep the finish in shape. That'll hold off another refinishing job for as long as possible.

Lawn Invader

Each spring, a plant invades my lawn, then dies back. Weed killer doesn't help. How can I find out what it is?

—STAN LAMMONTE, LANCASTER, N.Y.

ROGER COOK REPLIES: Dig it up, and it is a plant tag, and send it to the agriculture or horticulture program of your nearest cooperative extension office. Local offices are listed in the USDA website (www.usda.gov). Once they identify the weed, you'll have a fighting chance against it.

Continued on page 93

Our historic district says our replacement gutters must be wood, but we'd like to avoid the maintenance. Any ideas?

—JOSHUA GUR, WINDHAM, MASS.

TOM SILVA REPLIES: You may want to consider fiberglass gutters like those chosen by the owners of the late at TOH TV project house, in Arlington, Massachusetts. Made and hung by The Fiberglass Gutter Company (fiberglassgutter.com), they look just like traditional wood. But the fiberglass rot or need paint. And because the seams are fused in the field, they won't leak, either.

Many historic districts in New England have already approved these gutters as replacements for wood. When your district sees them, maybe you'll also get a greenlight. The company ships gutters in 28-foot sections of over the roadway, so take a look at the steps at right to see if the project is something you'd like to do yourself on-site.



Installer Peter Robinson makes sure the gutter slopes 1/8 inch every 10 feet.

1 | Attach stand-off blocks. With a 12-inch miter saw, cut 1/4-inch slices from the end of a 1/4-inch piece of cellular PVC trim to use as stand-off blocks. Nail them vertically to the fascia at each gutter location with 18-gauge stainless-steel brads, as shown. Next, snap a chalk line over the blocks where you want the top of the gutter's back edge to go. It should slope toward the downspout location 1/8 inch per 10 feet.



4 | Seal the joints. Tapered miter and attach end caps, sealing the glass fiber fibers and tape over the joint on the outside of the gutter. Cut two 6-inch wide strips of fiberglass mending tape to cover the joint in the trough. Pull on an angle, using respirator and gloves, and wipe the sanded surfaces with acetone. Brush a mix of polyester resin and glass mat into the trough and onto the strips until the fibers are saturated. After 30 minutes, snip off any projecting fibers and remove the tape.

2 | Cut sections to length. Wearing a dust mask, gloves, and eye protection, cut the gutter with the miter saw. For runs that end at a corner, cut the gutter ends square to match the length of the fascia. Sections that meet at a corner need to be mitered. For each outside miter, cut, add the spacer block thickness to the fascia length. For each inside miter, cut, subtract the block's thickness.



5 | Set the outlets. Fit each downspout location with a 2 1/2-inch hole saw to cut through the bottom of the trough. Wearing latex gloves, use a speed of twist to cut square, grade polyurethane sealant onto the flange of the downspout outlet. Then, holding the outlet as shown, seal it into the hole, twisted side down. Wait about an hour for the sealant to set before attaching the downspout.

3 | Mount the gutters. Sand the trough at each cut with 80-grit paper. Then, with a helper, lift the gutter into position against the spacers and line up its back edge with the chalk line. Drive a 3/8-inch stainless-steel structural screw through the back edge, through the stand-off block, and into the rafter. Repeat at each stand-off block.



6 | Fasten the downspout. Fit the downspout over the outlet and join them with three stainless-steel sheet metal screws, as shown. Repeat at each downspout joint. Finally, wearing gloves and a respirator, fill the junction on the outside of the gutter with a polyurethane resin. Backer with a nonabsorbent filler. Given the joint isn't airtight, then apply the putty with a gloved finger. Wipe up any excess with acetone.

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Ask THIS OLD HOUSE

New recessed lights
I recently pulled down the crumbling ceiling in my kitchen, exposing the joists. I'd like to have recessed can lights in the new ceiling, but I'm not sure whether to install them before the drywall goes up or after. Which method will be easier?

—RICHARD BRICKLEY, NORTH DUMFRIES, ONT.

TOM SILVA REPLIES: It will be far easier and faster to install new construction recessed fixtures while the ceiling is open, rather than to cut holes in your new ceiling and then install remodel units.

So the obvious next question is: How do you put up the ceiling drywall without leaving the lights? Well, you do bury them—each sheet of drywall goes up next, without any holes—then you go back and cut a hole in each location using the fixture as a guide each time. To do this, you need

a contour tool, which is basically a small one-handed router built for slicing through drywall. (If you don't want to shell out about \$70 for one, you can rent.) Here's how the job's done.

After the fixtures are installed, but before you put up a drywall sheet that will cover them, measure out from the center of the fixture in two dimensions—one parallel to the joists and one perpendicular to them—to where the corresponding edges of the sheet will land. Then scribe or cut to a wall or to the edge of a drywall sheet that's already installed. Transfer those measurements to the side of the sheet that will face down, and mark where they intersect. Now you'll know where each light is located after the ceiling is in place.

When the sheets are all up, fit a drywall-cutting bit into the contour tool's wheel, and set the bit 1/8 inch deeper than the thickness of the drywall. Now plunge the bit into the

mark at the center of the fixture and cut through the drywall in any direction out to the fixture's trim ring. When the bit hits the ring, hop the bit over to the ring's outside edge. Hold the bit against the edge as you cut around it. The result: a perfect circle, exactly where it should be.

Cutting drywall this way is dusty business, so always wear a mask and safety glasses. Hearing protection is also a must. Contour tools are noisy little buggers.

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PROJECT OF THE WEEK

HOW TO BUILD A RAISED HERB GARDEN PLANTER



Growing fresh herbs indoors can be a tricky task, but an outdoor garden bed requires vast space that not all of us have. So what's an herb lover to do? If you've got a free afternoon and basic carpentry skills, you can build an all-weather raised planter that can live on your porch or patio.

Constructed of pressure-treated deck posts and boards that you can find at your local home center, this compact piece takes up less than 16 square feet, and even has a few handy hooks to hold your gardening tools. Best of all, it will let you enjoy fresh herbs all season long.

You'll find all the tools and supplies necessary for this—and any—home project at The Home Depot nearest you.

For easy how-to instructions and a list of the tools and materials you'll need, go to thisoldhouse.com/project

Ask THIS OLD HOUSE



Norm's tricks of the trade

I can't find face-grain wood plugs to match the wood I'm using on a stair project. What now?

—TODD LOCKWOOD, MAYFIELD, NASH

A Why not make your own? You need a drill, a scrap of the same wood you're trying to match, and a plug cutter. These cutters carry many diameters from 1/2 inch to 2 inches in diameter, as well as various shapes. To match the diameter of the hole, choose the right cutter. The cylindrical ones in which the screws fit. Make sure your drill can be used with a drill—some require a drill press—then follow these steps:

1) Clean the scrap. A workbench and put the bar in the drill. Hold it perpendicular to the wood's face. Turn it on, then slowly sink the cutter about 1/4 inch into the scrap. Watch the bit spinning. It's all right out. Repeat in different places on the scrap so that you'll have a selection of colors and grain patterns to match the wood being plugged.

2) Strip the plug free. After the cutter has done its job, the bottom of the plug is still attached to the scrap. Insert a flat screwdriver into the slot next to the screw and gently pry it. It doesn't take much force to crack it loose.



What is it?



3) Circular-saw guide. The Square-Cut works like a rubber square. Cut into the wood that adjusts to the offset between the blade and the shoe. You simply align the arm with the outline and mark the cut. See s32.1000.com

This Old House blueprint

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COVER STORY: "About Hydrology" (pg. 80-83)

ENGINEER/STAFF: (pg. 82) **Theresa Annis** Editor
 Theresa Annis is a senior editor at American Society of Professional Surveyors (ASPS). She is also a member of the American Society of Professional Surveyors (ASPS) and the National Geographic Society.

NEAR SOLUTIONS: (pg. 81-82) **Hydrology**
 Near-surface hydrology is a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface. It is a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface.

BEFORE + AFTER KITCHENS: (pg. 83-84) **Hydrology**
 Before and after kitchens are a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface. It is a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface.

BEFORE + AFTER BEDROOM: (pg. 85-86) **Hydrology**
 Before and after bedrooms are a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface. It is a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface.

Yellow River: (pg. 80-81) **Hydrology**
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GET THE LOOK FOR LESS: (pg. 82-83) **Hydrology**
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GET THE LOOK FOR LESS: (pg. 82-83) **Hydrology**
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GET THE LOOK FOR LESS: (pg. 82-83) **Hydrology**
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WEEKEND PROJECTS: (pg. 84-85) **Hydrology**
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RECREATING A LOST CRAFTSMAN: (pg. 86-87) **Hydrology**
 Recreating a lost craftsman is a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface. It is a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface.

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TRUCKLENOOTIS YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN? (pg. 88-89) **Hydrology**
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64 IMPORTANT NUMBERS EVERY HOMEOWNER SHOULD KNOW: (pg. 76-77) **Hydrology**
 64 important numbers every homeowner should know is a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface. It is a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface.

ARE THIS OLD HOUSES? (pg. 80-81) **Hydrology**
 Are these old houses is a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface. It is a branch of hydrology that deals with the flow of water in the subsurface.

SAVE THIS OLD HOUSE: (pg. 82-83) **Hydrology**
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THIS ISN'T THE OLD HOUSE: (pg. 84-85) **Hydrology**
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TRUCKLENOOTIS YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN? (pg. 88-89) **Hydrology**
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THE HISTORY (and real 1880s dry goods merchant William Sweet) left equal laws to seek his fortune. He founded west side Long Beach where he found success early on serving as the designer of a brick and then opening a furniture business. This lovely Queen Anne, which he built with his wife, Nettie, in 1891, was to serve as a summer project for his old home in the few short years since leaving home. Sadly, the good times didn't last. Sweet's business collapsed in 1894, and he and Nettie divorced in 1897. Left alone in the 4,876 square-foot house, who divided it into apartments before moving to Los Angeles in 1902. Since then, the house has had many owners. In 2008, the city bought it but it could be relocated and restored. But the city believed the house to move the house and demolish it. It was a loss to the city, which now allows a new village to expand onto the lot. WHY SAVE IT? The elaborate exterior reveals many original details, including turned porch posts and a spindlework frieze. The inside is filled with elaborate millwork, wainscoting, and Lincoln casings. WHAT IT MEANS In addition to the value of the structure—a nearby lot is available for \$200,000—the house needs new systems and roof and wall repairs. It cannot be used as a rental, and the new owner must demolish the interior apartment. Because of the owner's new condition, over a million dollars. Restoring the house to the shop and once a museum might be a sure bet, but one that will require the effort. —HILLARY



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(1) The two-level porch. The house has a detailed exterior with decorative bargeboards, a turned and patterned brick chimney, a full porch wraps around the side of the house and is supported by elaborate turned posts. (2) The exterior reveals its masonry work and bargeboards. (3) A window bay with fluted casings. Many of the home's windows are broken and covered with plywood.



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